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MURDERING SDI

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OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. COURTER. Mr. Speaker, one of the lesser noticed practices of terrorist groups in Europe is attacking targets which are of special value to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]. Fuel pipelines, computer companies, and defense contractors are all hit with more frequency than many Americans realize. And of course, the attacks upon European and American soldiers and their bases are continual. There is very definitely a military side to political terrorism.

I was therefore extremely concerned to see a pattern developing in Europe this year in which scientists and military officers closely involved with strategic defense work and the European role in SDI were dying in remarkable numbers. Yet as of May 2d, when I raised the issue in a speech before the Committee for the Free World, there was only a press item or two to indicate anyone had noticed a pattern, or taken any interest in it.

I was pleased to learn subsequently that the president of the National Forum Foundation, Mr. Jim Denton, had been making a thorough inquiry into this concert of circumstances. The results of that inquiry, just published this month, literally merit headlines.

It is not reasonable to believe that America and her European allies are dealing with coincidence. The details are too overwhelming in number, too consistent, and in some cases too explicit (statements by the terrorists acknowledge that SDI is the real target of their assassinations).

I would strongly urge my colleagues in the House to read the Jim Denton/Peter Schweizer article closely, and to consider its implications. Among these, certainly, must be the unity of left-wing terrorists in Europe, the military ramifications of their peacetime strikes, and the confluence of interests—at the very least—between the leftist terrorists international and the U.S.S.R., which has made many official efforts to kill SDI.

[From the National Review, July 31, 1987]

MURDERING SDI

Since last July there have been seven terrorist bombings, three assassinations, five highly suspicious "suicides," and one disappearance among European scientists, re-

searchers, defense contractors, and military and government officials. All the victims were involved with hightech, defense-related research, most of it linked directly to the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and all the deaths took place in the midst of a high-profile campaign by the Soviets to kill SDI development. Three of the dead men were senior advisors to Western European governments; each of them had participated in sensitive and previously secret SDI "cooperation talks" between their respective governments and Washington. Although some individual reports of the more dramatic terrorist incidents have appeared in the press, as yet not one in the U.S. Government or media has seriously addressed the SDI-related killing spree.

On July 9, 1986, Karl-Heinz Beckurts and his driver were killed by a remote-control bomb outside Munich. Beckurts was the Director of Research at the Siemens Company, an SDI contractor; in June 1985, he had met with U.S. Government officials to discuss the possibility of conducting SDI research. According to a report in the Los Angeles Times (July 10, 1986), government officials said Beckurts had been involved in research on SDI technologies, although a company spokesman denied it. In late 1985 and early 1986, Beckurts served as an advisor to the Bonn government during SDI cooperation talks with Washington. A letter left by the Marxist Red Army Faction (RAF) indicated Beckurts was assassinated because of his involvement in these "secret negotiations." Beckurts name appeared on an RAF hit list of businessmen and researchers who had expressed interest in SDI, which was found during a raid on a Red Army Faction safehouse shortly after Beckurts' death.

On October 10, 1986, Gerold von Braunmuhl, a West German Foreign Ministry official, was shot dead by a masked gunman while leaving a taxi near his home outside Bonn. Von Braunmuhl has been a principal advisor to West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher during SDI cooperation talks with the United States. According to the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, von Braunmuhl had "great responsibilities" in these secret talks and "will hardly be replaceable." Near the scene of the murder police found a six-page letter written by a faction of the RAF claiming re-

sponsibility. In an apparent reference to von Braunmuhl's role in West Germany's secret discussions with Washington, the communiqué stated: "Today we have, through the Ingrid Schubert Commando, shot dead the secret diplomat von Braunmuhl." Investigators say that the same typewriter was used in the von Braunmuhl and the Beckurts communiqués.

NO TO STAR WARS

On March 20, 1987, General Licio Giorgieri of the Italian Defense Ministry was gunned down by two assassins on the streets of Rome. Giorgieri, the Director General of the Department of Space and Armaments Procurement at the ministry, was the leading advocate of SDI in the Italian armed forces. Giorgieri, like Beckurts and von Braunmuhl, served as a principal advisor to his government during the SDI cooperation talks. The Union of Fighting Communists, a faction of the Italian Red Brigades, claimed responsibility for the attack in a rambling 14-page communiqué. According to that document, Giorgieri "was struck down exclusively for his responsibility exercised following the Italian adhesion to the Star Wars project." The word "exclusively" was underlined in the document, which closed with: "No to Star Wars." Only a few days later, French police reported that Giorgieri's name appeared on yet another hit list, this one discovered in a raid on a Direct Action safehouse in Orleans. Direct Action is a well-known Marxist terrorist group.

While these attacks against high government officials were taking place, private European defense contractors were also targeted by terrorist groups. As a matter of security, virtually all defense contractors had initially attempted to keep their SDI contracts secret. And for good reason. In several instances, terrorist attacks followed hard on the heels of public disclosure that a company was seeking or participating in SDI-related research.

On June 18, 1986, the German Ministry for Research and Technology released Paper No. 31-86, identifying companies engaged in research on missile-defense-related technologies. Barely a month later, two of the companies listed were attacked. On July 24, the offices of the Fraunhofer Research Institute in Aachen sustained heavy damage from a bomb blast. According to Paper No.

31-86, Fraunhofer was conducting SDI-related research on a high-energy laser project known as Eurolaser. On July 25, a 15-pound bomb rocked the headquarters of the Dornier Company in Immenstaad. Dornier was working with the Sperry Corporation on the Instrument Pointing System, a device that allows objects in space to be targeted with greater accuracy.

In August, two months after the CSF Thomson corporation was publicly awarded an SDI contract, Thomson's Paris office was bombed. The firm was working on free-electron lasers, a technology that, according to General James Abrahamson, director of the U.S. Government's Strategic Defense Initiative effort, would make "a dramatic difference" in the SDI system. Thomson was also reportedly working on gallium-arsenide integrated circuits for SDI. These circuits, which are faster than silicon chips and more resistant to countermeasures, are designed to reduce the reaction time of the weapons system. According to French embassy officials in Washington, Direct Action is believed to be responsible for this attack.

On September 18, 1986, the Research Institute of Optics in Tublin, West Germany, was bombed. Rumors had circulated that the institute was conducting research on SDI, but the firm strongly denied it. According to a spokesman for the institute, as reported in the German press, the institute is "not engaged in any research connected with SDI."

Again, on October 29, barely a month after a public announcement that the AEG Company of West Germany was bidding on an SDI contract, its Copenhagen office was bombed. AEG was proposing to study means of applying SDI technology to a missile-defense system for Western Europe under the Theater Defense Architecture Study.

The IBM Research Center in Heidelberg, West Germany, was damaged on November 16, 1986, when a bomb exploded inside. The Red Army Faction claimed responsibility for the attack. IBM had four SDI contracts, although it is not clear whether SDI work was being done at the particular facility that was bombed.

On November 20, 1986, the home of Guenter Spur was shattered by a bomb. Spur was shattered by a bomb. Spur, the director of the Fraunhofer Institute's Berlin office, survived the apparent assassination attempt.

Unlike the aftermath of the murders of Beckurts, von Braunmuhl, and General Giorgieri, there were no communiqués issued connecting the bombings with SDI. Perhaps it is only coincidental, but the intensity of these attacks and their concentrated focus on SDI contractors strongly suggest that the ultimate target was SDI.

NO WITNESSES, NO MOTIVE

During the same period in which anti-SDI attacks were taking place on the Continent, there was in Great Britain a bizarre suicide wave. Five high-tech defense researchers—at least three of whom were apparently working on SDI-related research—died, apparently by their own hand.

In August 1986 Vimal Dajibhai, a computer-guidance expert with Marconi Defense

Systems, Britain's largest SDI contractor, apparently committed suicide by jumping from a bridge in Bristol. In a telephone interview Bristol police said there were no witnesses nor could they find a motive. A month later, in an especially determined effort, Ashhad Shariff, a computer expert with Marconi who was reportedly working on the interception of projectiles, apparently killed himself by driving off in his car after having first tied one end of a rope around a tree and the other end around his neck. According to the same Bristol police: no witness, no motive.

On March 30, 1987, David Sands, a computer expert with Easams, also an SDI contractor, was killed when his car slammed into an abandoned building in Surrey. The car, which had been loaded with gasoline-filled containers, exploded violently. Again: no witness, no motive.

In January 1987, Aytar Singh-Gida, a Sikh friend of Dajibhai, disappeared while conducting tests in central England. Singh-Gida was working on military-funded research on sonar technologies, research with apparent SDI applications. Police are still investigating his disappearance, including recent reports that he has been spotted in the red-light district of Paris.

There have been two other mysterious suicides by individuals who, though not directly engaged in SDI research, were connected with high-tech defense-related industries. On February 21 of this year, Peter Peapell, a senior lecturer at Britain's Royal Military College of Science, died in his garage as a result of carbon-monoxide poisoning. He apparently took his own life, after he and his wife entertained friends at their home. According to press accounts, the wife knew of no motive. And in May 1987, Richard Greenhalgh, a 46-year-old computer salesman with Defense Center of ICL, apparently slashed his wrists and leaped off a bridge onto railroad tracks some sixty feet below. Greenhalgh survived the fall but died a few days later in a nearby hospital. At the time police said there were neither witnesses nor any apparent motives. Defense Center of ICL is the principal computer contractor for the Royal Navy's Opcon Command and Control Center at Northwood, London.

A LOCAL MATTER?

This peculiar series of deaths has not been entirely overlooked by the British government. In Parliament, John Cartwright of the Liberal/Social Democratic Alliance has called for an investigation. In a letter to the Defense ministry, he noted: "Mr. Dajibhai, Mr. Shariff, and Mr. Singh-Gida were all working on aspects of underwater vibration simulation which has extensive implications for the Strategic Defense Initiative. I understand that Mr. Sands was also involved in SDI-related research on computer-controlled radar." The British government, however, maintains that these victims were not connected with the SDI research program, and that they were merely conducting research related to the interception of projectiles. British embassy officials in Washington acknowledge, however, that this re-

search would "most definitely" have potential application to SDI. Thus far, the government considers the deaths a local matter and is not conducting its own investigation.

Back in July 1986, Kurt Rebmann, Germany's Federal Prosecutor investigating the Beckurts murder and the Dornier and Fraunhofer bombings, told the New York Times that he believed these three attacks were part of "a coordinated offensive" against the West in general and SDI in particular. The subsequent terrorist assassinations and bombings—as well as the discovery of the communiqués and hit lists—appear to confirm Rebmann's early suspicions. There may be no connection between the bombing spree in Europe and the suicide binge in Great Britain, and in none of the SDI-related suicides is there any hard evidence of foul play. Perhaps it is just a statistical aberration. But it is curious that British high-tech researchers became particularly vulnerable to suicide at the precise time terrorist were striking at SDI targets on the Continent.

What is clear from their own words is that several European terrorist groups are zeroing in on SDI, a dramatic and ominous departure from their traditional tactics and strategy. According to Dr. Yonah Alexander, author of thirty books on international terrorism, "Left-wing European terrorist groups traditionally confine themselves largely to political targets, symbols of capitalism and 'Western imperialism,' the victims usually having nothing in common except perhaps being part of 'the system.'" In the past, European terrorists were rarely driven by anything more specific than a desire for ransom or for the release of their comrades in prison. But the recent attacks appear aimed at sabotaging a specific military weapons system by adding enormous human and financial costs to the contractors' cost benefit equation, as well as by intimidating SDI proponents and scientists at every level.

Why have a number of otherwise independent terrorist organizations suddenly banded together to sabotage SDI development? It is tempting to speculate that the Soviets' high-intensity public-relations campaign to stop SDI has exceeded diplomatic norms. Of course, it may be just another freak coincidence that the Soviets' assault on SDI was launched simultaneously with the terrorists' strikes. Another possibility is that Marxist terrorists are taking their cues from Moscow's public statements, without direct KGB involvement. Senator Robert Dole plans to call for an investigation into the SDI attacks that may answer these questions.

Until then, we do know that Soviet leaders are desperately anxious to stop the development and deployment of the Strategic Defense Initiative, and that they have an established record of willingness to knock off civilians in furtherance of political goals. In view of the Kremlin's preoccupation with killing SDI, its cozy relationship with various terrorist groups, and the pattern of its past behavior, it would be naive and irresponsible to ignore its possible complicity.